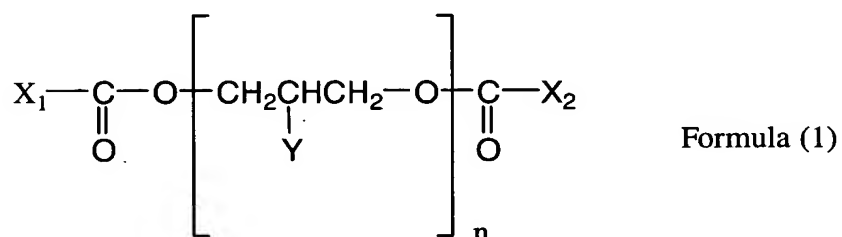


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming toner comprising at least a binding resin, a colorant, and a polyglycerol ester compound represented by the following formula (1), wherein an esterification ratio of the polyglycerol ester compound is 50% or higher and a polycondensation degree n of the polyglycerol is an integer from 9 to 30:



wherein in formula (1), X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub> each independently represent an aliphatic hydrocarbon having 9-39 carbon atoms; and Y represents OH or OCOX<sub>1</sub>.

2. An image forming toner according to claim 1, further comprising a charge controlling agent.

3. An image forming toner according to claim 1, wherein the polyglycerol ester compound is contained in the toner in an amount of 0.1 to 10% by weight.

4. An image forming toner according to claim 3, wherein the polyglycerol ester compound is contained in the toner in an amount of 1 to 5% by weight.

5. An image forming toner according to claim 1, wherein the image forming toner is a one-component development toner.

6. An image forming toner according to claim 1, wherein the image forming toner is a two-component development toner that is used in combination with a carrier.

7. An image forming toner according to claim 1, wherein the binding resin is a polyester resin.

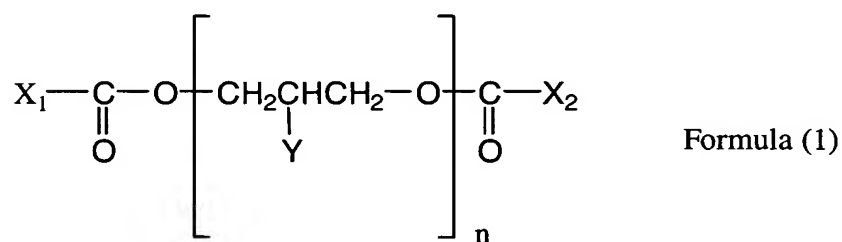
8. An image forming toner according to claim 1, wherein the colorant is a color colorant.

9. An image forming toner according to claim 1, wherein the toner is used in flash fixation and further includes at least one light absorbing material selected from the group consisting of a light absorbing material having a principal absorption wavelength region in a principal emission wavelength region of a flash lamp, a light absorbing material having an absorption wavelength peak at a wavelength that is longer than said principal emission wavelength region, or a light absorbing material having substantially flat light

absorptivity at least from said principal emission wavelength region to a visible light region.

10. An image forming toner according to claim 1, wherein the esterification rate of the polyglycerol ester compound is obtained by  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR measurement.

11. An image forming method comprising the steps of:  
developing an electrostatic latent image on an image bearing body by use of an image forming toner that includes at least a binding resin, a colorant, and a polyglycerol ester compound represented by the following formula (1); transferring the developed toner image onto a recording medium; and fixing the toner image on the recording medium, wherein an esterification ratio of the polyglycerol ester compound is 50% or higher, and a polycondensation degree of  $n$  of the polyglycerol is an integer from 9 to 30:



wherein in formula (1),  $\text{X}_1$  and  $\text{X}_2$  each independently represent an aliphatic hydrocarbon having 9-39 carbon atoms; and  $\text{Y}$  represents  $\text{OH}$  or  $\text{OCOX}_1$ .

12. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the image forming toner further comprises a charge controlling agent.

13. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the polyglycerol ester compound is contained in the image forming toner in an amount of 0.1 to 10% by weight.

14. An image forming method according to claim 13, wherein the polyglycerol ester compound is contained in the image forming toner in an amount of 1 to 5% by weight.

15. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the developing step includes one-component development using the image forming toner.

16. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the developing step includes two-component development in which the image forming toner is used in combination with a carrier.

17. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the binding resin of the image forming toner is a polyester resin.

18. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the colorant of the image forming toner is a color colorant.

19. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the fixing step includes flash fixation of the image forming toner which further includes at least one light absorbing material selected from the group consisting of a light absorbing material having a principal absorption wavelength region in a principal emission wavelength region of a flash lamp, a light absorbing material having an absorption wavelength peak at a wavelength that is longer than said principal emission wavelength region, or a light absorbing material having substantially flat light absorptivity at least from said principal emission wavelength region to a visible light region.

20. An image forming method according to claim 11, wherein the esterification ratio of the polyglycerol ester compound of the image forming toner is obtained by  $^1\text{H}$ -NMR measurement.